United Nations

Press Release

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Japan contributes further $9 billion to Gulf Peace Fund set up to support efforts to restore peace and stability in area in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

- Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination discusses Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

- Government officials representing countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, and from Central and Eastern Europe debate regions' economic transition.

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The Government of Japan has informed the United Nations that it has extended an additional contribution of some $9 billion to the Gulf Peace Fund. The Fund was set up by the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf in order to support countries undertaking activities to restore peace and stability in the Gulf region in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

The contribution follows donations from Japan last year amounting to some $2 billion.

In a letter to the Secretary-General yesterday, a spokesman for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the burden of the countries working for the restoration of peace and stability in the Gulf region was exceedingly heavy. He said his Government had made the contribution in recognition of its responsibility to actively contribute to international efforts in that regard.

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The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination today continued its discussion on the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, proclaimed in 1983 by the General Assembly.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The goals of the Decade are to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind on grounds of race, colour or national or ethnic origin, especially by the eradication of racial prejudice, racism and racial discrimination.

In considering the issue, the Committee has before it the reports of the Secretary-General to the last sessions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade.

The Special Committee against Apartheid meanwhile will hold a solemn meeting on 21 March to observe the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The annual observance coincides with the thirty-first anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre when South African police, unprovoked, fired on several thousand demonstrators who were peacefully protesting against apartheid laws requiring Africans to carry passes at all times.

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Economic transformation has been the topic of talks that just ended in Vienna between high-ranking government officials from Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Eastern Europe. Initiated by the United Nations Economic Commissions for Europe (ECE) and for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the meeting was the first of its kind.

Among the more than 30 participants, the consensus for market economics was clearly evident. They cited the presence of the North American trading bloc and the European Community as major hindrances to the development of free trade in both regions. Delegates also agreed that their dialogue should be continued so that the two regions could cooperate more closely in the future.

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